

United States Department of Agriculture

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

**FUTURE OF BIG BEARS ASSURED
ON ALASKA NATIONAL FOREST**

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A carefully worked out game management plan adopted five years ago by three agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is helping to maintain the Alaska brown and grizzly bears on Admiralty Island in the Tongass National Forest. The plan was based on a study by the Forest Service, the Biological Survey and the Alaska Game Commission.

The island now has a relatively dense population of both the grizzly and brown bears, and there is no danger of their extermination, according to Dr. H. L. Shantz, Chief of the Division of Wildlife Management of the Forest Service. It is ideal range and is producing a heavier crop than is being harvested. The plan coordinated management of the bears with present and prospective activities on the island, and allows carefully regulated hunting to prevent overstocking which probably would result in the end in a smaller production.

The Alaska brown bear, the largest carnivorous animal in the world, differs only in minor peculiarities from the grizzly, and holds the same place in American big game as the lion in Africa and the tiger in India.

In the management plan bear are recognized as a major resource and given their proper consideration so as to insure the perpetuation of the animals in satisfactory numbers, Doctor Shantz explains. Other uses of the island do not interfere, nor do the bear interfere seriously with human uses. The fame of the Alaskan bear brings not only hunters but other travellers to the Territory and in two large areas closed to hunting at all times the Forest Service has provided observation points where visitors may safely watch the bears fishing for salmon in their native haunts.

The total number of grizzly and big brown bear on the Chugach and Tongass National Forests in Alaska is about 4500 at the present time. Other big game animals in these National Forests include an estimated 6700 black bear, 36,400 Sitka deer, 530 moose, 5850 mountain goats, and 1575 mountain sheep, according to the most recent game population census.

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